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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/780,444	02/17/2004	Peter M. Bonutti	782-A03-023	2789

33771 7590 09/12/2007
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EXAMINER

NEAL, TIMOTHY J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3731

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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09/12/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/780,444

Applicant(s)

BONUTTI ET AL.

Examiner

Timothy J. Neal

Art Unit

3731

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 May 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-44 and 46-48 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-44, 46-48 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

The Examiner is withdrawing the Election/Restriction dated 4/10/2007 and replacing it with a new Election/Restriction requirement.

Election/Restrictions

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-42, drawn to a suture anchor, classified in class 606, subclass 232.
- II. Claims 43, 44, and 46-48, drawn to a method of securing suture relative to body tissue, classified in class 128, subclass 898.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions I and II are related as product and process of use. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product or (2) the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product. See MPEP § 806.05(h). In the instant case the suture retainers can be used in a materially different process. The method does not include all of the structural limitations of the products and the suture retainer can be used without applying a force of 1 to 20 pounds to them. These retainers may also be used in securing fabric and have nothing to do with the body.

Because these inventions are independent or distinct for the reasons given above and there would be a serious burden on the examiner if restriction is not required because the inventions have acquired a separate status in the art in view of their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

Because these inventions are independent or distinct for the reasons given above and there would be a serious burden on the examiner if restriction is not required because the inventions require a different field of search (see MPEP § 808.02), restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

Because these inventions are independent or distinct for the reasons given above and there would be a serious burden on the examiner if restriction is not required because the inventions have acquired a separate status in the art due to their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

The Examiner also notes that there are numerous species disclosed, but that may not be claimed. Because of the large number disclosed, the Examiner considers this to be a burden and is requiring further election on the disclosed species as follows:

Species I- figures 1-3

Species II- figure 4

Species III- figure 5

Species IV- figure 6

Species V- figures 7 and 8

Species VI- figure 9

Species VII- figures 10 and 11

Species VIII- figures 12 and 13

Species IX- figures 14 and 15

Species X- figures 16 and 17

Species XI- figures 18-20

Species XII- figure 21

Species XIII- figure 22

Species XIV- figure 23

Species XV- figure 24

Species XVI- figure 25

Species XVII- figures 26-28

Species XVIII- figures 30A-30B

Species XIX- figure 31

Species XX- figure 32

Species XXI- figures 33A-33B

Species XXII- figures 34A-34B

Species XXIII- figure 35

Species XXIV- figure 38

Species XXV- figure 39

Species XXVI- figures 40-47

The Applicant refers to these drawings as representing separate embodiments. The Examiner sees no need to disagree. These species have different designs and there is a serious burden in searching for 26 separate species. The Applicant needs to elect one species and state the claims associated with that species.

The list above is only directed at disclosed species. There are also distinct species claimed. These claimed species should be associated with one of the species above. The Examiner would normally match the claimed species with the disclosed species, but this is nearly impossible because of inconsistent terminology between the claims and the specification. For example, "extension member" does not appear in the specification so the Examiner has no idea which species figure includes an extension member. Below the Examiner is providing a breakdown of the distinct claimed species. This is only illustrative and is only provided in an attempt to move this case forward with some degree of clarity. The Applicant is required to select one of the species above. Again, because of the issues with the terminology, the Examiner is only providing this as illustrative.

This application contains claims directed to the following patentably distinct species: Species A (claim 1), Species B (claim 25), and Species C (claim 37). The species are independent or distinct because these suture retainers have different designs. Species A includes first and second sections. The other species do not include a second section. Species B includes a channel. Species C includes a central passage. As claimed, these species do not include the same features and are thus independent and distinct.

Species A includes three subspecies A1, A2, and A3. Claim 4 includes a pair of parallel channels, claim 9 includes a pair of parallel extension members, and claim 13 includes a center post. These subspecies have a different design as claimed.

Applicant is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Currently, no claims are generic.

Applicant is advised that a reply to this requirement must include an identification of the species that is elected consonant with this requirement, and a listing of all claims readable thereon, including any claims subsequently added. An argument that a claim is allowable or that all claims are generic is considered nonresponsive unless accompanied by an election.

Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include (i) an election of a species or invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143) and (ii) identification of the claims encompassing the elected invention.

The election of an invention or species may be made with or without traverse. To reserve a right to petition, the election must be made with traverse. If the reply does not distinctly and specifically point out supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election shall be treated as an election without traverse.

Should applicant traverse on the ground that the inventions or species are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the inventions or species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the

record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C.103(a) of the other invention.

Upon the allowance of a generic claim, applicant will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which depend from or otherwise require all the limitations of an allowable generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141. If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which are readable upon the elected species. MPEP § 809.02(a). Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Timothy J. Neal whose telephone number is (571) 272-0625. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9:00-5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, LoAn Thanh can be reached on (571) 272-4966. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3731

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

TJN


ANHTUAN T. NGUYEN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
7/4/07.